TO CONSERVE THE MOISTURE

Cultivation of Grain Lands After Harvest Is Custom Dry Farmer Must Think Seriously Of.

In this dry climate the cultivation of the grain land soon after harvest tends to conserve the moisture already stored in the soil and it is a custom we will have to take up more seriously than in the past. The furrowed land is in good condition to catch and store the rain and the later cultivation clears the surface of weeds and leaves a mellow soil mulch to conserve the moisture which has been stored in the subsoil. The early and continued cultivation of the soil favors the action of the bacteria and the development of available plant food, says the Denver Field and Farm.

By practicing this method the farmer may cultivate a larger area early in the season when the soil is in good condition whereas if it is necessary to plow the whole field, some of the land may become too dry to plow Likewise the later plowing leaves the soil too loose and not in good seed-bed condition. By several cultivations with a common harrow after the ridges have been worked down with a disk sled, the soil may be well pulverized and firmed and put into good condition.

In fact the larger part of the seedbed area has not been loosened deeply and even with little or no rain the subsurface soil remains firm and the seed-bed is in ideal condition to germinate the wheat. In the ideal system of culture the purpose is to keep a mellow soil mulch on the surface of the land all of the time, not only during the growth of the crop; but also in the interval between barvest and

seeding time. Thus, after the crop is planted, the land is kept cultivated with the weeder or harrow in order to break the surface crust and conserve the moisture.

Following out the same principle. the harrowing or work with the weeder is continued after the grain is up and during the growing period frequent cultivation is required for intertilled crops. After harvest the tillage is not discontinued, but the surface is loosened by cross-disking as soon as possible after the crop is removed and thus the soil is kept going continually so as not only prevent the loss of water already stored in the soil, but also this same condition and mellow surface favors the absorption of rain and largely prevents the loss of the water by surface drainage. A man in Prowers county brought through a good stand of alfalfa this year by turning under a fine top mulch so as to place it at the bottom of a ten-inch furrow and in this way he

showed the neighbors a new object lesson in modern agriculture.

President Taft has manifested some thing akin to bitterness in his opposition to the recall feature of "progressive" politics.

All the same, he is on a trip of speechmaking, with the purpose of urging the recall of every congress man who does not agree with his poli-

the expense of the many are rejoicing throughout the world over the blow to commercial freedom in Canada.

By RANDALL DARRISH .. AUTHOR OF MY LADY OF THE SOUTH ILLUSTRATIONS BY DEARBORN MELVILL.

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CHAPTER I—Jack Keith, a typical border plainsman, is riding along the Santa Fe trail on the lookout for roaming war parties of savages. Keith had won his purs as captain in a Virginia regiment during the civil war. He had left the service to find his old southern home in ashes, his friends scattered, and the fascination of wild western life had allured him. He notices a camp fire at a distance and then sees a team attached to a wagon and at full gallop pursued by men on ponies.

CHAPTER II—When Keith reaches the wagon the raiders have massacred two men, shot the horses and departed. He searches the victims finding papers and a locket with a woman's portrait. He resolves to hunt down the murderers.

CHAPTER III-Keith reaches Carson City and is arrested there charged with murdering and robbing the two travelers. His accuser is given as Black Bart, a notorious ruffian.

knowledged but one duty-to get the mail through on time.

The dust of their passing still in the air, Keith rode on, the noise dying away in his rear. As the hours passed his horse wearied and had to be spurred into the swifter stride, but the man seemed tireless. The sun was an hour high when they climbed the long hill, and loped into Carson City. cantonment was to the right, but Keith, having no report to make, rode directly ahead down the one long street to a livery corral, leaving his horse there, and sought the nearest restaurant.

Exhausted by a night of high play and deep drinking, the border town was sleeping off its debauch, saloons and gambling dens silent, the streets almost deserted. To Keith, whose former acquaintance with the place had been entirely after nightfall, the view of it now was almost a shock-the miserable shacks, the gaudy saloon fronts, the littered streets, the dingy, unpainted hotel, the dirty flap of canvas, the unoccupied road, the dull prairie sweeping away to the horizon. all composed a hideous picture beneath the sun glare. He could scarcely find a man to attend his horse, and at the restaurant a drowsy Chinaman had to be shaken awake, and frightened into serving him. He sat down to the miserable meal oppressed with disgust-never before had his life seemed so mean, useless, utterly without excuse.

He possessed the appetite of the open, of the normal man in perfect physical health, and he ate heartily, his eyes wandering out of the open window down the long, dismal street. A drunken man lay in front of the "Red Light" saloon sleeping undisturbed; two cur dogs were snarling at each other just beyond over a bone; a movers' wagon was slowly coming in across the open through a cloud of yellow dust. That was all within the radius of vision. For the first time in years the East called him the old life of cleanliness and respectability. He swore to himself as he tossed the Chinaman pay for his breakfast, and strode out onto the steps. Two men were coming up the street together from the opposite direction-one lean, dark-skinned, with black goatee, the other heavily set with closely trimmed gray beard. Keith knew the latter, and waited, leaning against the door, one hand on his hip.

"Hullo, Bob," he said genially; "they must have routed you out pretty early today."

They shore did Jack." was the re-

Mr. Taft's Form of "Recall."

For Mr. Tatt, recall by law is all wrong; but recall at the behest of the president is all right.

Protectionists and beneficiaries of government favoritism to the few at

sponse. He came up the steps somewhat heavily, his companion stopping below. "The boys raise hell all night, an' then come ter me ter straighten it out in the mawnin'. When did ye

"An hour ago; had to wake the 'chink' up to get any chuck. Town

looks dead." "Tain't over lively at this time o' day," permitting his blue eyes to wander up the silent street, but instantly bringing them back to Keith's face,

"but I reckon it'll wake up later on." He stood squarely on both feet, and one hand rested on the butt of a revolver. Keith noticed this, wonder-

ing vaguely. I reckon yer know, Jack, as how I ginerally git what I goes after," said the slow, drawling voice, "an' that I draw 'bout as quick as any o' the boys. They tell me vo're a gun-fighter, but it won't do ye no good ter make a play yere, fer one o' us is sure

"Get me?" Keith's voice and face



"Are You Goin' to Raise a Row, or Come Along Quietly?"

expressed astonishment, but not a muscle of his body moved. "What do you mean, Bob-are you fellows after

"Sure thing; got the warrant here," and he tapped the breast of his shirt with his left hand.

The color mounted into the cheeks of the other, his lips grew set and white, and his gray eyes darkened. "Let it all out, Marshal," he said sternly, "you've got me roped and tied. Now what's the charge?"

Neither man moved, but the one below swung about so as to face them, one hand thrust out of sight beneath the tail of his long coat. "Make him throw up his hands,

Bob," he said sharply. "Oh, I reckon thar ain't goin' ter be no trouble," returned the marshal genially, yet with no relaxation of at-

"Keith knows me, an' ex-

pects a fair deal. Still, maybe I better ask yer to unhitch yer belt, Jack." A moment Keith seemed to hesitate plainly puzzled by the situation and endeavoring to see some way of escape; then his lips smiled, and he silently unhooked the belt, handing it

"Sure, I know you're square, Hicks," he said, coolly. "And now I've unlimbered, kindly inform me what this is all about."

"I reckon yer don't know." "No more than an unborn babe. I have been here but an hour."

"That's it: if yer had been longer thar wouldn't be no trouble. Yo're wanted for killin' a couple o' men out at Cimmaron Crossin' early yesterday mornin'."

Keith stared at him too completely astounded for the instant to even speak. Then he gasped.

"For God's sake, Hicks, do you believe that?"

"I'm damned if I know," returned the marshal, doubtfully. "Don't seem like ye'd do it, but the evidence is straight 'nough, an' thar ain't nothin' fer me ter do but take ye in. I ain't no jedge an' jury."

"No, but you ought to have ordinary sense, an' you've known me for three years.

"Sure I have, Jack, but if yee've gone wrong, you won't be the first good man I've seen do it. Anyhow, the evidence is dead agin you, an' I'd arrest my own grand-dad if they give me a warrant agin him."

"What evidence is there?" "Five men swear they saw ye haulin' the bodies about, and leotin' the

pockets. Then Keith understood, his heart beating rapidly, his teeth clenched to keep back an outburst of passion. So that was their game, was it?-some act of his had awakened the cowardly suspicions of those watching him across the river. They were afraid that he knew them as white men. And they had found a way to safely muzzle him. They must have ridden hard over those sand dunes to have reached Carson City and sworn out this warrant. It was a good trick, likely enough to hang him, if the fellows only stuck to their story. All this flashed through his brain, yet somehow he could not clearly comprehend the full meaning, his mind confused and dazed by this sudden realization of danger. His eyes wandered from the steady gaze of the marshal, who had half drawn his gun fearing resistance, to the man at the bottom of the steps. Suddenly it dawned upon him where he had seen that dark-skinned face, with the black goatee, before-at the faro table of the "Red Light." He gripped his hands together, instantly connecting that

sneering, sinister face with the plot. "Who swore out that warrant?" "I did, if you need to know," a sarcastic smile revealing a gleam of white teeth, "on the affidavit of others,

friends of mine."

"Why are you?" "I'm mostly called 'Black Bart.'" That was it; he had the name now

-"Black Bart." He straightened up so quickly, his eyes blazing, that the marshal jerked his gun clear. "See here, Jack," shortly, "are yer goin' to raise a row, or come along

quiet? As though the words had arouse him from a bad dream, Keith turned to front the stern, bearded face. "There'll be no row, Bob," he said,

CHAPTER IV.

quietly. "I'll go with you."

An Old Acquaintance. The Carson City lock-up was an im-

provised affair, although a decidedly popular resort. It was originally a two-room cabln with gable to the street, the front apartment at one time a low groggery, the keeper sleep ing in the rear room. Whether sudden death, or financial reverses, had been the cause, the community had in some manner become possessed of the property, and had at once dedicated it to the commonweal. For the pur pose thus selected it was rather well adapted, being strongly built, easily guarded, and on the outskirts of the town. With iron grating over the windows, the back door heavily spiked, and the front secured by iron bars, any prisoner once locked within could probably be found when wanted. On the occasion of Keith's arrival, the portion abutting upon the street was occupied by a rather miscellaneous assembly-the drunk and disorderly elements conspicuous-who were awaiting their several calls to appear before a local justice and make answer for various misdeeds. Some were pacing the floor, others sat moodily on benches ranged against the wall, while a few were still peacefully slumbering upon the floor. It was a frowsy, disreputable crowd, evincing but mild curiosity at the arrival of a new prisoner. Keith had barely time to glance about, recognizing no familiarity of face amid the mass peering at him, as he was hustled briskly forward and thrust into the rear room, the heavy door closing behind him with the snap of a spring lock.

He was alone, with only the faintest murmur of voices coming to him through the thick partition. It was a room some twelve feet square, open the roof, with bare walls, and containing no furniture except a rude bench. Still dazed by the suddenness of his arrest, he sank down upon the seat, leaned his head on his hands, and endeavored to think. It was difficult to get the facts marshalled into any order or to comprehend clearly the situation, yet little by little his brain grasped the main details, and he awoke to a full realization of his condition, of the forces he must war against. The actual murderers of those two men on the trail had had suspicions aroused by his actions; they believed he guessed something of their foul deed, and had determined to clear themselves by charging the crime directly against him. It was a shrewd trick, and if they only stuck to their story, ought to succeed. He had no evidence, other than his own word, and the marshal

had already taken from his pockets the papers belonging to the slain man. He had not found the locket hidden under his shirt, yet a more thorough search would doubtless reveal that also.

Even should the case come to trial. how would it be possible for him to establish innocence, and—would it ever come to trial? Keith knew the character of the frontier, and of Carson City. The inclination of its citizens in such cases was to act first, and reflect later. The law had but slender hold, being respected only when backed by the strong hand, and primitive instincts were always in the ascendency, requiring merely a leader to break forth in open violence. And in this case would there be any lack of leadership? Like a flash his mind reverted to "Black Bart." There was the man canable of inciting a mob. If, for some unknown reason, he had sufficient interest to swear out the warrant and assist in the arrest, he would have equal cause to serve those fellows behind him in other ways. Naturally, they would dread a trial, with its possibility of exposure, and eagerly grasp any opportunity for wiping the slate clean. Their real security from discovery undoubtedly lay in his



"Oh, De Good Lawd, Dat Am Massa Waite an' John Sibley."

death, and with the "Red Light" crowd behind them they would experience no trouble in getting a following desperate enough for any pur-

The longer Keith thought the less he doubted the result. It was not then a problem of defence, but of escape, for he believed now that no opportunity to defend himself would ever be allowed. The arrest was merely part of the plot intended to leave him helpless in the hands of the mob. In this Hicks was in no way blamablehe had merely performed, his sworn duty, and would still die, if need be, in defence of his prisoner. He was no tool, but only an instrument they had found means of using.

Keith was essentially a man of action, a fighter by instinct, and so long accustomed to danger that the excite ment of it merely put new fire into his veins. Now that he understood exactly what threatened, all numbing feeling of hesitancy and doubt vanished. and he became instantly alive. He would not lie there in that hole waiting for the formation of a mob; nor would he trust in the ability of the

He had some friends without-not many, for he was but an occasional visitor at Carson-who would rally to Hick's assistance, but there would not be enough on the side of law and order to overcome the "Red Light" outfit, if once they scented blood. If he was to be saved from their clutches, he must save himself; if his innocence was ever established it would he by his own exertions-and he could accomplish this only out yonder, free under the arch of sky.

He lifted his head, every nerve tingling with desperate determination. The low growl of voices was audible through the partition, but there was no other sound. Carson City was still resting, and there would be no crowd nor excitement until much later. Not until nightfall would any attack be attempted; he had six or eight hours yet in which to perfect his plans. He ran his eyes about the room searching for some spot of weakness. It was dark back of the bench, and he turned in that direction. Leaning over, he looked down on the figure of a man curled up, sound asleep on the floor. The fellow's limbs twitched as if in a dream, otherwise he might have deemed him dead, as his face was buried in his arms. A moment Keith hesitated; then he reached down and shook the sleeper, until he aroused sufficiently to look up. It was the face of a coal-black negro. An instant the fellow stared at the man towering over him, his thick lips parted, his eyes full of sudden terror. Then he sat up, with hands held before him as though warding off a blow.

"Fo' de Lawd's sake," he managed to articulate finally, "am dis sho' yo', Massa Jack?"

Keith, to whom all colored people were much alike, laughed at the expression on the negro's face.

"I reckon yer guessed the name, all right, boy. Were you the cook of the Diamond L?" "No, sah, I nebber cooked no di'onds.

I'se ol' Neb, sah." "What?"

"Yes, sah, I'se de boy dat libbed wid ol' Missus Caton durin' de wah. I ain't seen yo', Massa Jack; sence de day we buried yo' daddy, ol' Massa Keith. But I knowed yo' de berry minute I woke up. Sho' yo' 'members Neb, sah?"

It came to Keith now in sudden rush of memory-the drizzling rain in the little cemetery, the few neighbors standing about, a narrow fringe of slaves back of them, the lowering of the coffin, and the hollow sound of earth falling on the box; and Neb, his Aunt Caton's house servant, a black imp of good humor, who begged so hard to be taken back with him to the Why, the boy had held his stirwar. rup the next morning when he rode away. The sudden rush of recollection seemed to bridge the years, and that black face became familiar, a memory of home.

"Of course, I remember, Neb," he exclaimed, eagerly, "but that's all years ago and I never expected to see you again. What brought you West and got you into this hole?"

The negro hitched up onto the bench, the whites of his eyes conspicuous as he stared uneasily about-he had a short, squatty figure, with excessively broad shoulders, and a face of intense good humor.

"I reck'n dat am consider'ble ob a story, Massa Jack, de circumlocution ob which would take a heap ob time "But it tellin'," he began soberly. happened 'bout dis way. When de Yankees come snoopin' long de East Sho'-I reck'n maybe it des a yeah after dat time when we done buried de ol' Co'nel-dey burned Missus Caton's house clah to de groun'; de ol' Missus was in Richmond den, an' de few niggers left jest natchally took to de woods. I went into Richmond huntin' de ol' Missus, but, Lawd, Massa Jack, I nebber foun' nuthin' ob her in dat crowd. Den an' officer man done got me an' put me diggin' in de trenches. Ef dat's what wah am, I sho' don' want no mo' wah. Den after dat I jest natchally drifted. I reckon I libbed 'bout eberywhar yo' ebber heard ob, fo' dar want no use ob me goin' back to de East Sho'. Somebody said dat de West am de right place fo' a nigger, an' so I done headed west."

He dropped his face in his black hands, and was silent for some minutes, but Keith said nothing, and finally the thick voice continued:

"I tell you', Massa Jack, it was mighty lonely fo' Neb dem days. I didn't know whar any ob yo' all was, an' it wan't no fun fo' dis nigger bein' free dat away. I got out ter Independence, Missouri, an' was roustaboutin' on de ribber, when a couple ob men come along what wanted a cook to trabbel wid 'em. I took de job, an' dat's what fetched me here ter Carson City."

"But what caused your arrest?" "A conjunction ob circumstances, Massa Jack; yes, sah, a conjunction ob circumstances. I got playin' pokah ober in dat 'Red Light,' an' I was doin' fine. I reckon I'd cleaned up mo'n a hundred dollars when I got sleepy. an' started fo' camp. I'd most got dar w'en a bunch ob low white trash jumped me. It made me mad, it did fo' a fact, an' I reckon I carved some ob 'em up befo' I got away. Ennyhow, de marshal come down, took me out ob de tent, an' fetched me here, an' I ben here ebber sence. I wan't goin' ter let no low down white trash git all dat money."

"What became of the men you were working for?"

"I reckon dey went on, sah. Dey had 'portent business, an' wouldn't likely wait 'round here jest ter help a nigger. Ain't ennybody ben here ter see me, nohow, an' I 'spects I'se eradicated from dey mem'ry-I 'spects I

CHAPTER V.

The One Way.

Keith said nothing for some moments, staring up at the light stealing in through the window grating, his mind once again active. The eyes of the black man had the patient look of a dog as they watched; evidently he had cast aside all responsibility. now that this other had come. Final-

ly Keith spoke slowly: "We are in much the same position, Neb, and the fate of one is liable to be the fate of both. This is my story' -and briefly as possible, he ran over the circumstances which had brought him there, putting the situation clear enough for the negro's understanding, without wasting any time upon detail. Neb followed his recital with bulging eyes, and an occasional excla-

mation. At the end he burst forth "Yo' say dar was two ob dem white men murdered-one an ol' man wid a gray beard, an' de odder 'bout thirty? Am dat it, Massa Jack, an' dev had fo' span ob mules, an' a runnin' hoss?"

Yes. "An' how far out was it?"

"About sixty miles." "Oh, de good Lawd!" and the negro threw up his hands dramatically. "Dat sutt'nly am my outfit! Dat am Massa

Waite an' John Sibley." You mean the same men with whom you came here from Indepen-

Neb nodded, overcome by the dis-"But what caused them to run such a risk?" Keith insisted. "Didn't they

know the Indians were on the war

path?" "Sho'; I heard 'em talkin' 'bout dat, but Massa Waite was jest boun' foh to git movin'. He didn't 'pear to be 'fraid ob no Injuns; reck'ned dey'd nebber stop him, dat he knowed eb-

bery chief on de plains. I reck'n dat he did, too." "But what was he so anxious to get away for?"

"I dunno, Massa, I done heerd 'em talk some 'bout dey plans, an' 'bout some gal dey wanted ter fin', but I didn't git no right sense to it. De Gin'ral, he was a might still man." "The General? Whom do you mean?

Not Waite?" "John Sibley done called him dat." Then Keith remembered—just 8 dim, misty thread at first, changing tightly spiked down. Nor did the

slowly into a clear recollection. was riding with despatches from Longstreet to Stonewall Jackson, and had been shot through the side. first of Jackson's troops he reached was a brigade of North Carolinians, commanded by General Waite General Willis Waite. He had fallen from his horse at the outposts, was brought helpless to the General's tent, and another sent on with the papers. And Mrs. Waite had dressed and bandaged his wound. That was where he had seen that woman's face before, with its haunting familiarity. He drew the locket from beneath his shirt, and gazed at the countenance revealed, with new intelligence. There could be no doubt-it was the face of her who had cared for him so tenderly in that tent at Manassas before the fever came and he had lost consciousness. And that, then, was Willis Waite lying in that shallow grave near the Cimmaron Crossing, and for whose death he had been arrested. 'Twas a strange world, and a small one. What a miserable ending to a life like hisa division commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, a Lieutenant-Gov-ernor of his state. What strange combination of circumstances could ever have brought such a man to this place, and sent him forth across those Indian-scouted plains? Surely nothing ordinary. And why should those border desperadoes have followed, through sixty miles of desolation, to strike him down? It was not robbery, at least in the ordinary sense. What then? And how was "Black Bart" involved? Why should he be sufficiently interested to swear out a warrant, and then assist in his arrest? There must be something to all this not apparent upon the surface-some object, some purpose shrouded in mystery. No mere quarrel, no ordinary feud, no accident of meeting, no theory of commonplace robbery, would account for the deed, or for the desperate efforts now being made to conceal it.

Some way, these questions, thus surging upon him, became a call to live, to fight, to unravel their mystery. The memory of that sweet-faced woman who had bent above him when the fever began its mastery, appealed to him now with the opportunity of service. He might be able to clear this, bring to her the truth, save her from despair, and hand over to justice the murderers of her husband. It was up to him alone to accomplish this-no one else knew what he knew, suspected what he suspected. And there was but one way-through escape. To remain there in weak surrender to fate could have but one ending, and that swift and sudden. He had no doubt as to "Black Bart's" purpose, or of his ability to use the "Red Light" outfit as desired. The whole plan was clearly evident, and there would be no delay in execution-all they were waiting for was night, and a lax guard. He glanced about at the wells of the room, his eyes grown hard, his teeth

"Neb," he said shortly, "I guess that was your outfit all right, but they were not killed by Indians. They were run down by a gang from this town-the same fellows who have put you and me in here. I don't know what they were after-that's to be found out later,-but the fight you put up at the camp spoiled their game for once, and led to your arrest. They falled to get what was wanted in Carson, and so they trailed the party to the Cimmaron Crossing. Then I got on their track, and fearing the result, they've landed me also. Now they'll get rid of us both as best they These fellows won't want any CAD. trial-that would be liable to give the whole trick away-but they have got to put us where we won't talk. is an easy way to do this, and that is by a lynching bee. Do you get my

drift, Nep?" The whites of the negro's eyes were very much in evidence, his hands gripping at the bench on which he sat.

sho' does. I corroborates de whole thing." "Then you are willing to take I chance with me?"

"Fo' de Lawd, yes, Massa Jack, I

"Willin'! Why, Massa Jack, I'se overjoyed; I ain't gwine leave yer no mo'. I'se sho' gwine ter be yo' nigger.

What yo' gwine ter do?" Keith ran his eyes over the walls, carefully noting every peculiarity. "We'll remain here quietly just as long as it is daylight, Neb." he replied

finally, "but we'll try every board and every log to discover some way out. Just the moment it grows dark enough to slip away without being seen we've got to hit the prairie. Once south of the Arkansas we're safe, but not until then. Have you made any effort to get out?" The negro came over to him, and

bent down.

"I was layin' on a board what I'd worked loose at one end," he whispered hoarsely, "back ob de bench, but I couldn't jerk it out wid'out something ter pry it up wid."

Where is it?" "Right yere, Massa Jack."

It was a heavy twelve-inch plank, part of the flooring, and the second from the side-wall. Keith managed to get a grip next to the black fingers, and the two pressed it up far enough for the white man to run one arm through the opening up to his shoulder and grope about below.

"There's a two-foot space there," he reported, as they let the board settle stiently down into position. "The back part of this building must be set up on piles. I reckon we could pry that plank up with the bench, Neb, but it's liable to make considerable racket. Let's hunt about first for some other weak spot."

They crept across the floor, testing each separate board, but without discovering a place where they could exert a leverage. The thick planks we